

15 March 2006
Wednesday

READINGS

Psalm 119:73-96; Genesis 42:18-28; 1 Corinthians 5:6-6:8; Mark 4:1-20

DEVOTION

Ever wonder – “How did I get here?” I did when I spent a year in Sinai, Egypt from 2000 – 2001 as part of the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO), the international peace keeping force. North Camp where I stayed was called, “El Gorah” translated, “The Hole.” It was totally isolated, only surrounded by desert for miles around. It was not quite the same as being here on LSAA, but it was very close to it – going off camp posed many potential dangers on the roads and travel to Israel ceased after hostilities began in the region. Every day I pondered over the reason I was there with no preparation - but are we ever really prepared to be where God places us?

Finding myself in the midst of biblical history, I took advantage of my surroundings. A group of us traveled seven hours to South Camp, Sharm el Shiekh, to partake in the Easter morning Sunrise Service on the beach of the Red Sea. It was such a beautiful sight to see the sun rise over the waters that morning. Chaplain Spencer (Catholic Priest) delivered the message and baptized some in the sea and others previously baptized were sprinkled. I remember after service on our way home, I felt a change in me – I had an upwelling urge to cry. And I did cry, uncontrollably for almost the entire trip back. I cried deep within my soul and I could not stop the tears from streaming from my eyes nor could I understand why I was crying. Why did I cry - perhaps it was because two weeks later my sister was to die of cancer – I believe I cried for her not knowing her death was imminent - given three months to live yet she died before I could make it home within three days. Maybe I cried for myself too, just trying to be in tune with my own spirituality. I knew I cried for the sound of my three year old baby’s voice knowing every time I called he wanted to know when was mommy coming home because he needed me. I even cried for my Soldiers and the leadership there and hoped that everyday would be fruitful.

I felt so spiritually challenged that year and could not understand my spiritual woes until one day I was speaking to the Chaplain and he simply said, “We all have a cross to bear in life – your cross is the cross to care for others. And sometimes when we find we hurt the most, it is when we are trying to care for those we love.”

The Lord touches us all in different ways and sometimes He removes us from our “comfort zones” and places us in the “desert of life.” And like Joseph in the book of Genesis when he was taken from his home and sold by his brothers and found himself in Egypt as a servant, he was confronted with situations beyond his control, but despite his situation, he strived to care for others and was favored by God. He continued to have love for others including his brothers. Genesis 42:24 says, “....and he turned himself away from them and wept.”

As servants of God, at home or in distant lands, God desires to give us peace and joy in our hearts no matter where we are physically or spiritually. He lets us know that even through the difficult times – He truly loves each and everyone of us .

Prayer: Lord I know there is a cross I must bear as I follow after Jesus. Continue to give me a heart that cares about your people, my brothers and sisters. Even in my desert experience, Oh Lord, strengthen me to do your will and to love like Jesus loved.

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